DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 225 583 IR 050 077

AUTHOR	Walshak, Lynn G.
TITLE	Accessing United States Government Publications in the Georgia Southern College Library.
PUB DATE	Sep 82
NOTE	13p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Reference Materials - Bibliographies (131)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Abstracts; Annotated Bibliographies; *Classification; College Libraries; *Federal Government; *Government Publications; Higher Education; *Indexes; Library Collections; Library Guides
IDENTIFIERS	Georgia Southern College

ABSTRACT

Developed for use in the library and in government documents classes, this paper provides instruction in the identification and location of U.S. government publications in a specific depository library. The importance of government documents is noted. An explanation of the Superintendent of Documents (SuDoc) classification scheme as found in the "Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Publications" is given, as well as the means of determining whether a document is held by the library. The largest part of the paper describes the catalogs, indexes, and abstracts used to identify government documents. This discussion groups the reference tools according to whether a search is being conducted for current, retrospective, or specialized material. The numbering system of the SuDoc classification system is further examined as part of a section on the arrangement of the documents collection. Brief discussions of legislation and congressional publications, and the circulation of government documents conclude the paper. (Author/ESR)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED225583

ACCESSING UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS IN THE GEORGIA SOUTHERN COLLEGE LIBRARY

Compiled by
Lynn G. Walshak
Government Documents Librarian
Georgia Southern College Library
Sept. 1982

IR050077

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Lynn G. Walshak

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ACCESSING UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS IN THE GEORGIA SOUTHERN COLLEGE LIBRARY

Compiled by
Lynn G. Walshak
Government Documents Librarian
Georgia Southern College Library

Government regulations and policies have been in existence a long time, as reflected by the first known printed government document, written by Chen K'uei (1128-1203) and printed in 1210. It contained regulations of the Sung Dynasty. Boydand Rips, in U. S. Government Publications, stated that "government publications...are among the oldest written records, and if measured by their influence on civilization, are probably the most important of all living records."

The U. S. Government Printing Office, established in 1860, is one of the world's largest publishers. The range of subjects covered within government documents is very broad--from family research to finance charges; motorcycle safety to meteorology; day care centers to drug abuse; water quality and resources to weapons systems. Political scientists and historians readily recognize the valuable sources of information in documents, but documents also contain much useful material for students of science, mathematics, business, economics, sociology, education, humanities, and other social science fields.

GSC is extremely fortunate to have a large collection of United States government publications. Currently the library houses well over two

hundred and forty thousand U. S. documents in both hard copy and microform. Since 1939, the GSC library has been a member of the depository network, a cooperative program between the federal government and designated major libraries throughout the country. Under this program certain classes of U. S. Documents are supplied free to libraries for the purpose of making them available to the general public. Those government publications not found in the GSC collection are usually available to students, faculty, and staff through the library's interlibrary loan service.

A. P. Tisdel, former U. S. Superintendent of Documents, once said that government publications were the "despair of almost everyone who has attempted to make use of them." This is no longer true. Within the following pages you will find described the indexes that provide access to government documents. The intent of this paper is to indicate which indexes to use for location of certain kinds of information, the classification scheme, and shelving arrangement of the collection.

Because there are excellent indexes to U. S. government publications and because quick processing allows the most advantageous use of the up-to-date, statistical and legislative information contained in these materials, U. S. documents are housed separately from the rest of the library's holdings and are not listed in the main card catalog. The library's collection of government publications is located on the 3rd floor of the building. Within the collection, documents are arranged according to the classification system devised by the government specifically for them (see p.8 for further information), and are accessible through a variety of

specialized catalogs and indexes. An area next to the Government Documents Office contains all the bibliographic aids needed to use the collection. The Documents Librarian and Documents Assistants are available to provide additional assistance. Check with the Documents staff before assuming that any U. S. document is not available in the GSC library.

FINDING U. S. GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

If you are seeking a particular document and have a complete citation to it, the SuDocs classification number can be found by locating the publication indexed in the Monthly Catalog of U. S. Government Publications, the official index to U. S. federal publications. Each monthly issue of the Monthly Catalog has indexes which are cumulated semi-annually and annually. Prior to 1974, publications are indexed by subject only (keyword in context). Beginning in 1974, a title index was added to the Monthly Catalog. Major changes occurred in July 1976, when the indexes were increased to include authors and series/report numbers. All indexes were next standardized with Library of Congress subject headings and form/choice of entry. An index by SuDocs classification numbers was begun in 1978. There was now six different access points to documents through Monthly Catalog indexes.

The indexes refer to the entry number of each bibliographic citation in the Monthly Catalog. Call numbers/location for each publication are contained in each entry. Once the SuDocs call number is known, you may locate a publication on the shelf, or varify whether the GSC owns it. Ownership of publications acquired since Jan. 1977 may be varified in the

Documents Public Checklist, the card file located by the Documents office. The cards in the Public Checklist are filed in call number order.

Not all categories of documents are listed in the Public Checklist. Congressional bills and resolutions from which the laws evolve, are not listed. They are received in microfiche format and are arranged by congress, session and number in microfiche cabinets. If you are seeking documents on a particular subject, you must use the subject index of the printed catalogs and indexes. There is no subject approach to government publications through the Documents Public Checklist.

CATALOGS AND INDEXES - CURRENT

There are several printed indexes for current U. S. government documents. As with other indexes, it is usually advisable to build a vocabulary of search terms before beginning research. Essential to use is Library of Congress Subject Headings. Among the more important indexes for the general user are:

MONTHLY CATALOG OF U. S. GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS, 1895-
(Shelved next to Documents Office)
The basic index to current government publications; information given includes full bibliographical data and the documents classification number needed to locate the publication in the collection. Periodicals are listed alphabetically by title in the appendix of the February issue of the Monthly Catalog, or beginning in April 1977, in the Monthly Catalog Serial Supplement. The indexes have changed from time to time, but presently the indexes cumulate semiannually and annually, and contain entries by subject, author (corporate or personal name), title, series/report number, title keyword, and classification number. A cumulated subject index exists for the period 1900-1971, and there are cumulated personal author indexes for the years 1941-1975.

PUBLICATIONS REFERENCE FILE and EXHAUSTED PUBLICATIONS REFERENCE FILE
(Shelved next to Documents Office)

An index on microfiche of recently or to be published titles; citations contain classification number, stock number, whether available/in stock; price, etc. The EPRF lists those titles no longer available. Indexes by subject, classification number, and stock number.

INDEX TO U. S. GOVERNMENT PERIODICALS, 1970- date. (GSC has 1975-)
(INDEX area, main floor)

A computer generated author and subject index to over one hundred and forty periodicals produced by the U. S. Government. Each index volume contains a list of the journals covered and their classification numbers. Government periodicals are also represented in many of the other indexing and abstracting tools found elsewhere in the library e.g. PAIS, BUSINESS PERIODICALS INDEX, BIOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS, etc. (Document periodicals are divided between the Documents Collection and the periodicals on the first floor of the library.)

In addition to the above, there exist a number of more specialized indexes which also deal with current government publications:

AMERICAN STATISTICS INDEX, 1973- .
(Shelved next to Documents Office)

The U. S. government is the world's largest compiler of statistical information and AMERICAN STATISTICS INDEX (ASI) provides the most complete access to this data. Coverage is comprehensive for statistical publications issued since January 1, 1973. Indexing is by subject, title and category. The categories provide access to statistics on subjects broken down primarily by geographic regions, economic breakdowns or demographic characteristics, e.g. unemployment statistics, broken down by city. The indexes refer the user to the abstract volume which describes the content and availability of the document. Many of the publications listed in ASI can be located in the documents collection; others must be requested through interlibrary loan. The annual ASI volumes are supplemented with monthly issues.

CIS/INDEX TO THE PUBLICATIONS OF THE U.S. CONGRESS, 1970- .
(Shelved next to the Documents Office)

Located near the MONTHLY CATALOG, CIS abstracts and indexes congressional publications -- hearings, committee prints and public laws, as well as the numbered House and Senate reports and documents contained in the Serial Set. For the most part, CIS has superceded the MONTHLY CATALOG as the index of congressional materials issued since 1970. Among the forms of access provided are subject, author (corporate or personal), witness, title, and bill number. The index volumes refer the user to the abstracts section where documents are described and information necessary for locating the publication at GSC is usually found. Many of the documents included can be obtained in the documents collection; others must be requested through interlibrary loan. Monthly issues supplement the CIS annual volumes.

RETROSPECTIVE SEARCHING:

Although many of the indexes and catalogs of current government publications have been issued long enough to be valuable in retrospective searching as well, there exist a number of tools which are used solely for this purpose. Remember that some of the retrospective catalogs and indexes are themselves the product of an earlier century and your search terms may therefore need some adjustment.

Poore, Benjamin P. DESCRIPTIVE CATALOG OF THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS OF THE U. S. 1774-1881. (Shelved next to Documents Office)
A chronological list which gives author, title, and date for each document. The subject and name index in the rear of the volume refers the user to the page on which the document is listed. The page must then be scanned to locate one or more entried on the subject being researched. Does not contain SuDocs classification numbers.

Ames, J. G. COMPREHENSIVE INDEX TO THE PUBLICATIONS OF THE U. S. GOVERNMENT, 1881-1893. 2 vols. (Shelved next to Documents Office)
The arrangement is alphabetical by subject. There is a personal author index. Does not contain SuDocs classification numbers.

THE DOCUMENTS CATALOG, 1893-1940. 25 vols. (Shelved next to Documents Office)
A dictionary catalog listing publications by agency, subject, title, and author. The DOCUMENTS CATALOG provides the best subject approach to government publications for the period covered. Each volume of the CATALOG covers approximately two years of government publishing activity. The CATALOG does not contain SuDocs classification numbers for locating publications in the collection.

The general indexes listed above access all congressional publications as well as the documents of other branches of government. However, the CIS U.S. SERIAL SET INDEX, 1789-1969, facilitates location of congressional publications contained in the Serial Set with greater ease. Since most government publications were either originally published as part of the Serial Set or reprinted in it, the CIS SERIAL SET INDEX should help identify and locate 18th and 19th century documents.

CIS U. S. SERIAL SET INDEX, 1789-1969. 12 vols. (Shelved next to Documents Office)

The U. S. Serial Set is a collection of the basic publications of congress, i.e. journals, reports on private and public bills, reports resulting from congressionally conducted or commissioned investigations and a variety of documentation which congress has decided from time to time to incorporate into this numbered series. Congressional hearings are generally not included in the Serial Set. This index will access by subject the volumes which appeared in the Serial Set from 1789-1969. Access to Serial Set volumes appearing after 1969 is provided by the CIS INDEX (see p. 5), among other tools.

Many of the general indexes which identify older government publications, such as Poore and Ames listed above, unfortunately do not give the classification numbers necessary for finding the material in the GSC collection. In such cases, consult the following publications:

CHECKLIST OF U. S. GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS, 1789-1909. (Shelved next to the Documents Office)

A basic source for classification numbers prior to the twentieth century. Although there is no subject approach to documents in the 1909 CHECKLIST, the volume is useful for scanning the publishing output of the agencies of government and for identifying various editions of the same documents. An agency index appears in the rear of the volume.

CUMULATIVE TITLE INDEX TO UNITED STATES PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, 1789-1976. (Shelved next to the Documents Office)

A sixteen volume alphabetical listing of the titles of publications contained in the Public Documents Library of the Government Printing Office (now known as the Printed Archives Branch of the National Archives and Records Service), compiled by Daniel W. Lester, Sandra K. Faull and Lorraine E. Lester. SuDocs classification number included for each title. Titles taken from GPO shelflist cards, not the publication; thus may need to search all possible forms of the title.

In addition to all of the above current and retrospective indexes to documents, many of the individual government agencies issue lists and indexes of their own publications which can be extremely helpful. Important examples are the BUREAU OF THE CENSUS CATALOG, PUBLICATIONS OF THE BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, PUBLICATIONS OF THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, and the various

editions of the Senate Library's INDEX OF CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE HEARINGS. (Y 1.3:H 35/2/yr/suppl).

SPECIALIZED MATERIALS

In certain cases researchers may have need for government materials which are not covered in the bibliographic tools which have been already described. These materials would include such items as technical reports sponsored by the U. S. government and declassified government documents. Two specialized indexing tools are:

GOVERNMENT REPORTS ANNOUNCEMENTS & INDEX. 1965- .(title varies)
(C 51.9/4:vol/nos/sec)
Indexes and abstracts technical U. S. and foreign government-sponsored research, development and engineering reports and other analyses prepared by national and local governmental agencies, generally in the sciences, but increasingly in the behavioral and social sciences as well. Issues are published every two weeks with cumulated annual indexes. Access is by corporate and personal author, subject, contract and report number. Indexes refer to abstracts arranged by subject or field. In most cases, reports located through GRAI are available on microfiche obtain through interlibrary loan, or purchase from NTIS.

RESOURCES IN EDUCATION, 1966- .(Formerly RESEARCH IN EDUCATION)
(Shelved in A-V reading area, main floor)
Popularly called "ERIC", RESOURCES IN EDUCATION indexes and abstracts reports and selected materials in the field of education which are primarily unpublished elsewhere. Indexing is by corporate and personal author, subject, accession and clearinghouse number. The indexes refer to abstracts which describe content and availabilitiy of the report. RIE is issued monthly and the indexes cumulate at six-month and (until 1975) annual intervals. A THESAURUS OF ERIC DESCRIPTORS is available to help users select subject words or phrases for searching the indexes. Documents located through RIE are available on microfiche stored in cabinets in the A-V reading area.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

One must understand the arrangement of the documents collection in order to locate materials on the shelf. The Superintendent of Documents classification, devised by the federal government at the end of the nineteenth

century, groups all publications of a government agency together rather than by subject content. The alphameric call number can be divided into three major elements: agency symbol, series designation, and book number. Grouping is accomplished by the alphameric notation, the letters of which are derived from the name of the issuing agency, i.e. A for Agriculture Department, C for Commerce Department, E for Energy Department. Next follows numbers which designate first the subordinate unit of the agency, then the series numbers which range from .1 through .8. The book/publication number is divided from the first two elements of the notation by a colon. Thus, in the number A 13.4:27, A stands for the Department of Agriculture, 13 for the Forest Service, 4 for circular, and 27 for circular number 27. A 13.4:27 is therefore circular 27 of the Department of Agriculture's Forest Service.

An example of the arrangement of call numbers on the shelf follows:

A 13.4:3 A 13.4:27 A 13.4:C 48 C 1.6:5 D 1.2:B 63.

Call numbers which have a book number composed of both letters and numbers are shelved after identical call numbers which have only numbers in the book number. There are no decimals in the call numbers. Rather, all punctuation marks are simply "stop points', and following each one the numbering or alphabetizing begins anew. This makes reading the call numbers simple, and facilitates ease in finding materials on the shelf.

The government frequently undergoes reorganization, and agencies are abolished or attached to other agencies. This results in many classification number changes for an agency's publications. GSC Documents reclasses material to new class numbers when possible, to facilitate greater ease in locating publications in series with several class numbers. The documents Public

Checklist contains cross references so that changes in classification numbers of series can be followed. The publication GUIDE TO U. S. GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS by John L. Andriot, (shelved in Documents Office) can also be consulted for changed classification numbers of series. If you have any difficulty in understanding the classification system, or locating material on the shelf, ask for assistance at the Government Documents Office or Reference Desk.

REFERENCE AREAS

The majority of United States government publications are arranged by the Superintendent of Documents classification numbers described above. However, some publications have special shelving areas which are exceptions. Catalogs and indexes to government publications described in the first section of this leaflet are shelved by year on the counter-height shelves adjacent to the Documents Office.

All Bureau of the Census publications are on special shelving, arranged alphabetically in 28 sections by subject matter, i.e. agriculture, business, foreign trade, population, etc. Guides, handbooks, indexes, etc. to use with census materials are shelved in section 28 of the Census shelves.

Catalogs of publications by individual agencies are shelved in a section labelled Agencies Bibliographies, on special reference shelving.

CONGRESS AND LEGISLATION

One of the most frequent uses made of government publications is to trace the history of a bill's passage and implementation. The major tools used for this purpose include such titles as the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, DIGEST OF PUBLIC BILLS, STATUTES AT LARGE, U. S. CODE, FEDERAL REGISTER, CODE OF

FEDERAL REGULATION, and THE PUBLIC PAPERS OF THE PRESIDENT. These publications are at various locations. The STATUTES AT LARGE, U. S. CODE, and CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS are shelved in the Library of Congress collection with other law materials, not in the government documents collection. The PUBLIC PAPERS OF THE PRESIDENT are in the history section of the Library of Congress collection (J 80 A 283). The CONGRESSIONAL RECORD (X.) is shelved in the government documents, arranged by congress and session. The DIGEST OF PUBLIC BILLS is classified LC 14.6:cong/sess/pt. in government documents.

Some publications of Congress have not always been included within the Superintendent of Documents Classification. This is the case with the SERIAL SET, and the numbered documents and reports of the House and Senate. Until the 96th Congress, the Serial Set bound volumes are shelved in numerical order apart from the main collection. Beginning with the 97th Congress, the SERIAL SET is available only in microfiche format under the Y 1.1 classification number, grouped as Senate Documents, Senate Reports, House Documents, House Reports, etc.

CIRCULATION OF DOCUMENTS

Most publications within the documents collection may be checked out for use outside the library. The circulation period is the same as for materials from the main library collection, and may be renewed. Among the publications which cannot be checked out are: all Bureau of the Census publications (C 3. numbers), Congressional Record, Serial Set, and Documents Reference publications.